

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

LOCATION AND HISTORICAL SKETCH

THIS volume describes the culture of an Apachean-speaking tribe of the American Southwest as it existed during the youth of the older informants from whom data were collected. The Chiricahua were already horsemen and possessed their first firearms, but tribal life had not yet been disrupted by hostilities with the Americans.

The territory which they controlled during this period was extensive and is not easy to define accurately. They ranged through southwestern New Mexico, southeastern Arizona, and the northern parts of the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua. The Rio Grande acted as the eastern boundary. Occasional journeys and raids brought them as far north as the pueblo outposts of Laguna, Acoma, and Zuñi, but ordinarily they did not stray much farther north than the present site of Quemado, New Mexico. The western limits of their country can be roughly indicated, from north to south, by the present towns of Spur Lake, Luna, Reserve, and Glenwood in New Mexico, and by Duncan, Wilcox, Johnson, Benson, Elgin, and Parker Canyon in Arizona. To the south an undetermined area in northern Mexico was also under their control.

The Chiricahua bands were three in number. The most eastern and northern band, whose territories joined those of the Mescalero Apache at the Rio Grande, controlled almost all the Chiricahua territory west of the Rio Grande in New Mexico and has been given a number of names throughout the literature. Those occurring most frequently are Warm Springs or Ojo Caliente Apache, Coppermine Apache, Mimbrenos Apache, and Mogollones Apache. The Chiricahua name for this band is *Chéne*, "Red Paint People." In historic times this band has been led by Mangus Colorado, Victorio, Nana, and Loco. From historical records and the accounts of informants, the local groups and camp sites of the members of this band can be traced to the

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(657) Then too, the present Mescalero Apache Reservation upon which both of these tribes are now housed is but a fraction of the former range of these natives. Since it was not practicable to traverse this large area with informants, many plants which they had described were never recovered and identified. Yet, despite these unavoidable gaps in the record, it was possible to gather and identify the principal wild food staples of these two Apache tribes and to offer a fair sampling of that aspect of their food economy which is based on wild plants.

128 Lists, whether they be of plants or other culture traits, and descriptions of one aspect of a culture only, are often very misleading. It is necessary to know something about other aspects of the culture, that the place and importance of plant lore and plant utilization may be appreciated. It is with the purpose of placing the Mescalero and Chiricahua use of plants for foods, drinks, and narcotics in context and in relation to the cultural whole that this sketch of Apache life is offered.

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LINGUISTIC AND ETHNIC AFFILIATIONS

The Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache speak languages of the Athabaskan stock, one of the most widespread linguistic families of North America, whose representatives range from Alaska to the American Southwest. Athabaskan languages have been separated into three major linguistic groups, a Northern, a Pacific, and a Southern. The tribes which constitute the Southern Athabaskan division are the Navaho and Apache. Thus our Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache are most closely affiliated linguistically with the Jicarilla Apache, the Lipan Apache, the Kiowa Apache,² the

2. Because of their Plains-like material culture and their close association with the Kiowa Indians of the Plains, the Kiowa Apache have hitherto been treated apart from other Southern Athabaskan-speaking peoples. A tale, for which there is little substantiation, of a former home of these people in the Black Hills of South Dakota and of a close linguistic association between them and the Sarsi has been preserved in American anthropology since the days of Mooney. Recent linguistic work by Dr. Harry Holier, of the University of Chicago, has definitely established Kiowa Apache as a Southern Athabaskan language. A study of Kiowa social organization by Dr. J. G. McAllister (Doctoral Thesis, University of Chicago, 1935) gives evidence of a kinship system and social forms almost identical with those of the Jicarilla and Lipan Apache. See Opler (21).

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Western Apache (Northern Tonto, Southern Tonto, White Mountain or Coyotero, Cibecue, and San Carlos Apache), and the Navaho. The dialects of the Chiricahua and Mescalero are usually close—closer, in all probability, than the dialects of any two other Southern Athabaskan tribes. 197 •

Ethnic ties point in the same direction. With due allowance for individual tribal variations and the influence of adjoining culture areas, there emerges a basic core of mythology, belief, and social organization common and peculiar to these Southern Athabaskans. In this respect the Mescalero and Chiricahua are again found to be most closely associated. In fact, the evidence of language, custom, and geographical location strongly suggests that these two tribes represent a late differentiation of a parent stock. 184
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LOCATION

The land which the Mescalero claim was theirs in aboriginal times lay principally in what is now New Mexico. The eastern limit of their recognized territory was the flat country to the east of Hondo, but expeditions for salt, or to hunt antelope and buffalo often took them far beyond this point and many times east of the Pecos. Occasionally they wandered as far north as Santa Fe. On the south their range extended into northwestern Texas and into northern Chihuahua and Coahuila, Old Mexico. The Rio Grande was their western boundary. The favorite Mescalero haunts were to be found in the San Andreas, Sacramento, and Guadalupe mountain ranges. Places within this central mountainous area are the ones most frequently mentioned in the old stories, and from this section hunting expeditions and raiding and war parties would start out for the more remote parts of Mescalero territory. 131

The Chiricahua ranged through western New Mexico, southeastern Arizona, and southward into Old Mexico. Their eastern boundary began at the Rio Grande. They ranged westward approximately to the eastern boundaries of the present White Mountain and San Carlos Indian reser- [224]
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